

***Freedom's Gate:  
The Southern Insurgency in the American Revolution  
1780-1781***

by

**Stephen E. Bower, Ph.D.**

**Command Historian  
U.S. Army Soldier Support Institute  
Fort Jackson, South Carolina**

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*"In the Annals of both Ancient and Modern History Presbyterianism and Rebellion, were twin-Sisters sprung from Faction, and their Affection for each other, has ever been so strong, that a separation of them never could be effected. What KING has ever reign'd in Great-Britain, whose Government has not been disturb'd with Presbyterian Rebellions, since ever they were a People?"*

Isaac Hunt  
*Through a Looking Glass for Presbyterians,  
or a brief examination of their Loyalty, Merit, and other  
Qualifications for Government, etc.  
1764<sup>1</sup>*

In September 1780 during the Southern Campaign of the American Revolution, the British Army began moving north in hopes of extending British occupation from South Carolina into the adjoining colony of North Carolina. On 7 September, Major Patrick Ferguson arrived at Gilbert Town, Rutherford County, North Carolina, and issued the following threat to members of enemy partisan forces that had been driven from South Carolina and into the relative security of the western mountains. If they did not, wrote Ferguson, “desist from their opposition to the British arms, and take protection under his standard, he would march his army over the mountains, hang their leaders, and lay waste to their country with fire and sword.” Ferguson paroled a captured rebel and had him go spread the message among his comrades in hiding.<sup>2</sup>

Flush with victory and seeming success, British leaders like Ferguson believed the hard fighting in South Carolina was over and that only mop up operations remained. Shielding British commander General Lord Cornwallis’ left flank on the move into North Carolina, Ferguson’s force included a Ranger Battalion of “Provincial Regulars” from New York and New Jersey and several members of Loyalist militia units raised in the South.<sup>3</sup> Excepting Ferguson, a Scot serving in the British army, all of them were Americans. His ultimatum to the partisan insurgents

in and over the mountains was intended to give a defeated enemy the opportunity to throw down their arms, declare their allegiance to the King, or suffer the unbearable consequences. Since investing the city of Charleston, South Carolina, in May 1780, the British had captured or destroyed two American armies, established a series of military outposts or base camps throughout South Carolina, defeated or chased into hiding leading militia leaders and their units, and persuaded hundreds of partisan warriors to accept parole and quit the war. Who would have disputed Ferguson's assessment of events?

Exactly one month later, however, he would lie dead on the battlefield at King's Mountain, his body, according to one account, riddled with eight musket balls some of which may have found their target after he was already dead. Partisan soldiers would strip him of his clothing and silver whistles he had used to direct the battle while others may have returned to Ferguson's body later in the day to urinate on his naked corpse. In his history of the Southern Campaign, British Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton inferred the same when he wrote that patriot soldiers "used every insult and indignity, after the action, towards the dead body of Major Ferguson."<sup>4</sup>

John Buchanan, author of *The Road to Guilford Courthouse: the American Revolution in the Carolinas*, doubts the urination story since little evidence exists to support the allegation. However, he does concede that patriot soldiers were fully capable of such a thing. After all, these were the same people who, on the march to Gilbert Town with 698 captured enemy prisoners, had to be told by their commander, Colonel William Campbell of Virginia, "to restrain the disorderly manner of slaughtering and disturbing the prisoners." Campbell later failed to hold off a group of North and South Carolina partisans who selected 36 of the prisoners, all Loyalist

militia from North Carolina, neighbors and mortal enemies of their accusers, and placed them on trial for previous offenses that included among other things robbery, house burning, and assassination. All 36 were convicted and nine of them were hanged from a large oak tree. The lives of the remaining 27 were spared only after their executioners became sick of their task. The living might have wished to have died alongside their hanged comrades, since on the long march to Salem, North Carolina, patriot soldiers deliberately withheld food and water from their prisoners, executed more than one of them who attempted escape, and cut and stabbed others repeatedly for failure to keep up.<sup>5</sup>

Supposing for a moment that Ferguson's body did reek of urine on the evening of 7 October, it is not too far off to suggest that the British cause in the south, if not the war, began spiraling downward immediately after these citizen-soldiers, members of the patriot insurgency, pulled up their britches and began contemplating a time when they might have another opportunity to relieve themselves on other dead enemy soldiers. Deep animosity only begins to describe how these people felt toward the British and their loyal American friends who during the previous five months had succeeded in stoking a smoldering fire of bitter anger and resentment that literally burned within them.

The Battle of King's Mountain fought on October 7, 1780 was the climactic event of the insurgent war in the Southern Campaign of the American Revolution. The patriot force that fought there was a consolidation of militia units from North and South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, and southeastern Tennessee, people who inhabited the western most settlements of the American colonies. The battle followed a summer of unprecedented violence in South Carolina as the British army and their Loyalist allies unleashed a campaign of retribution and revenge

against individuals and families that had been in rebellion against the Crown since 1775. Until the British had transferred the bulk of their army and the seat of the war to the southern colonies in the spring of 1780, rebellion in the South had been directed at neighbors expressing loyalty to King George III and Indian tribes choosing to support the British cause. For the most part, it had been a civil war characterized by American on American violence.

### **The Southern War in 1780**

After the fall of Charleston in spring 1780, the southern war entered into a new phase, one built upon years of pent up religious and political animosity that pitted southern backcountry Presbyterians and their dissenting disposition against the British establishment and their loyal American allies. The long history of Presbyterian resistance to British rule and authority stretched back to Scotland and Northern Ireland and to a people schooled in dissent, if not rebellion, and openly suspicious and distrustful of the King, Anglican prelates, and Parliament. The Revolutionary War in the south became the latest link in a chain of events dating back to at least the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and the Presbyterian insistence they be allowed to pursue their own relationship with God free from the crown and the hierarchy of Episcopal or Catholic church officials. Of course, British and Tory alike were also a part of the long-running narrative that portrayed Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians as an obstinate and unyielding people all too willing to fight for their religious and indeed political liberty. In fact, the Presbyterian idea of liberty was so tightly bound to their long-standing struggle to free themselves from Britain and the established church that it was almost impossible to separate their politics from their religion.

The Scotch-Irish, by far the majority of backcountry Presbyterians, had migrated first from the lowland areas of Scotland in the 16<sup>th</sup> century to Northern Ireland, and then to the colonies in America throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Most of them had come through Pennsylvania and then down through the Shenandoah Valley to settle in the western areas of Virginia, North and South Carolina. While in Ireland they maintained close ties with the Presbyterian Church in Scotland by frequent back and forth travel of ministers. Surrounded by a largely hostile Catholic population in Ireland, they were barred from holding political office and required by Catholic-leaning monarchs in England to pay tithes to the Anglican Church. A flagging Irish economy was only one among other incentives that induced them to migrate to the colonies. As colonists, they had come to view America and then American Independence “as deliverance from a Great Britain that they detested.”<sup>6</sup>

Many of them came to America as part of larger communities or congregations. In some cases, entire Presbyterian congregations were led to American shores by their ministers. The Scotch-Irish tended to settle in “clusters of farmsteads” patterned after the clannish, family-related villages or “clachans” they had left behind in Ireland. Clachans developed around the Presbyterian Kirk or meetinghouse. For example, Bethel, Bethesda, Beersheba, and Bullock’s Creek Presbyterian Churches served the Scotch-Irish communities in the New Acquisition District of South Carolina during the American Revolution. By the beginning of the war, the North and South Carolina backcountry had an estimated 143,000 settlers. Historian James Leyburn counted “a few Swiss and Welch, large number of Germans, but more Scotch-Irish than all the others put together.”<sup>7</sup>

During the southern war of 1780, Presbyterians were considered guilty of treason by virtue of association. In a war where it was often hard to sort enemies from friends, Presbyterians became primary targets for the British because they were easier to identify; or so thought Charles Woodmason, Anglican missionary to the colonies who believed the backcountry of the Carolinas occupied by "a Sett of the most lowest vile crew breathing-Scot-Irish Presbyterians from the North of Ireland . . . the worst Vermin on Earth . . . ignorant, mean, worthless, beggarly . . . enemies to Christ and his Cross. . . the Refuse of Mankind," who lived "wholly on Butter, Milk, Clabber and what in England is given to Hogs and Dogs."

Like many of his countrymen, Woodmason believed the Scotch-Irish to be a lesser breed of people whose itinerant preachers traversed the countryside poisoning their minds, "instilling Democratical and Commonwealth Principles . . . Embittering them against the very name of Bishops, and all Episcopal Government and laying deep their Republican Notions and Principles – Especially that they owe no Subjection to Great Britain – That they are a free People."<sup>8</sup> There is no reason to doubt Woodmason's assessment of backwoods Presbyterians. In all likelihood, hard life in the American wilderness had made them even less responsive to British authority than they had been in Scotland and Ireland.

British and Loyalist soldiers during the summer and fall of 1780 roamed the backcountry of the Carolinas targeting the King's enemies plundering their properties; appropriating livestock, grain, and other necessities to sustain British troops; and burning churches and homes on the basis of religious affiliation and the discovery of unauthorized versions of the *Bible*. One historian of the Revolution estimated that at least fifty Presbyterian churches and places of worship, as well as numerous Presbyterian homes, were



destroyed by British soldiers during the war.<sup>9</sup> Anglicans on whole were loyal subjects of the king and Presbyterians and other religious dissenters were traitorous enemies. Presbyterianism, observed W. P. Breed “was prima facie evidence of guilt. A house that had a large Bible and David’s Psalms in meter in it was supposed, as a matter of course, to be tenanted by rebels.”<sup>10</sup> In most cases, British troops were correct in their assumptions. On a few occasions they were not. In his informative study of *Religion and Politics in Colonial South Carolina*, John Wesley Brinsfield, suggests that British soldiers using such measures of engagement often “created enemies out of people who had previously been loyal to the crown but opposed to the Church of England.” In modern parlance, loyal subjects of the king often became innocent victims of religious profiling by British soldiers.<sup>11</sup>

It was no coincidence that at least six of the militia colonels at King’s Mountain were elders in the Presbyterian Church, and the good majority of the men who fought with them were drawn from Presbyterian settlements west of the Catawba River. Seven members of the Kennedy family, Scotch-Irish Presbyterians from Union County, South Carolina, fought at the Battle of King’s Mountain including Captains Robert and Thomas Kennedy and relatives William, William Jr., John, Daniel and Moses.<sup>12</sup> They were what can be called religious insurgents reared in the Calvinist tradition, suspicious of authority in general and particularly so when it stretched from a British monarch who threatened to abridge their rights and their hard-earned freedom to worship God in the Calvinist-Presbyterian tradition of their ancestors.

The Reverend William Martin, who led five shiploads of Presbyterians from Belfast, Northern Ireland to Chester County, South Carolina in 1772, is a case in point. Imprisoned for “preaching rebellion from the pulpit,” Martin, hauled before Lord Cornwallis, told the British

general that King George “was bound to protect his subjects in the enjoyment of their rights. Protection and allegiance go together, and where the one fails the other cannot be exacted. The Declaration of Independence is but a reiteration of what our Covenanting fathers have always maintained.”<sup>13</sup>

The Covenanting fathers of whom Martin spoke were Protestant supporters of the Scottish Covenant of 1638, a national protest against attempts by the English King Charles I to introduce the Anglican “Book of Common Prayer” and the Episcopal system of government to the Church of Scotland. Sixty thousand Scottish Presbyterians signed the “National Covenant” in protest over what seemed like the reintroduction of Catholicism into the life of the largely Protestant nation. Upon assuming the English throne in 1660, Charles II, following his father’s hard line, repudiated Scotland’s national covenant, removed 400 non-conforming ministers from their churches, and replaced them with officials of the Anglican Church. Charles also imposed an Oath of Allegiance that bound the taker to uphold the supremacy of the English king in all religious and civil matters. The Oath created an immediate political crisis in Scotland since to take it put one in violation of the Scottish Covenant where all had declared the Lord Jesus Christ to be the only King and Head of his Church.<sup>14</sup>

To circumvent English authority and the Anglican Church, Presbyterians began worshipping informally in houses, barns, and often out in open. After 1666, the British army, given lists of Scots not attending Anglican services, literally began dragging individuals to church and quartering soldiers in Scottish homes until the residents felt compelled to comply with the law. At the Battle of Rullion Green in December 1666, the British army put down a

popular uprising among Covenanters. One hundred Covenanters were killed on the field of battle, 300 died attempting escape, and another 120 were taken prisoner and marched to Edinburgh. At Edinburgh, the prisoners were charged with treason and rebellion, found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. English officials hung as many as ten at a time from the same scaffold, dismembered their bodies and placed the pieces on public display as a warning to their Presbyterian brethren.<sup>15</sup>

After the British massacre of Continental troops at the Waxhaws on May 29, 1780, Reverend Martin thought he saw similarities between the treatment of Presbyterians in Scotland and what people of the church were beginning to experience in America. From his pulpit in Rocky Creek, he pleaded with his congregation to take up arms against the British. Go to the Waxhaws, he exclaimed. "Go see the tender mercies of Great Britain!" At the Waxhaws meeting house, "you may find men, though still alive, hacked out of the very semblance of humanity; some deprived of their arms, some with one arm or leg, and some with both legs cut off. Is not this cruelty a parallel to the history of our Scottish fathers?"<sup>16</sup> Had he survived the Battle of King's Mountain, Patrick Ferguson had intended on spending the night in nearby Bethel Presbyterian Church, "leave it in ashes by day-light . . . and be on the east side of the Catawba before nightfall."<sup>17</sup>

### **The Making of an Insurgency**

In all likelihood these people would have faded into the background of the American Revolution had it not been for what Walter Edgar calls "a series of incredibly stupid blunders by the British."<sup>18</sup> Following the British reduction of Charleston hundreds of partisan soldiers thinking all was lost began approaching British authorities seeking parole. General Clinton,

perhaps in a generous mood, extended liberal terms. In return for the promise to quit the war, the British offered protection, amnesty, and safe passage back home.

By the first week of June, however, Clinton had changed his mind. Abrogating the initial terms of surrender, Clinton demanded parole applicants take an Oath of Allegiance to the king and agree to take up arms against friends and former comrades. The British general signed the proclamation on 3 June. Partisan soldiers had 17 days to decide. After June 20 the offer would be revoked and those not taking the oath would be treated as before “rebels and enemies to their country.” Offering no middle ground, Clinton’s decree in effect forced neutrals and former partisans to pick a side. General Cornwallis, Clinton’s second in command, put it precisely. “In a civil war, there is no admitting of neutral characteristics, and . . . those who are not clearly with us must so far be considered against us.” Those refusing to declare their allegiance, Cornwallis thought, needed “to be disarmed, and every measure taken to prevent their being able to do mischief.”<sup>19</sup> Given such a choice, backcountry Presbyterians were the most unlikely group of people in the colonies to submit to an oath of this kind.

The following week British commanders in the backcountry began circulating its terms among the people and mobilizing Loyalist militia units to assist in subduing the few partisan militia forces that continued to resist the occupation. Loyalists set up camp at Alexander’s Old Field, an old militia muster ground in Chester County, and began, as one partisan recalled, “to plunder everybody suspected of disloyalty, taking horses & cattle and household goods also all the grain and forage as it was needed to supply the British cavalry.” Loyalist troops also began moving among the Presbyterian settlements at Fishing Creek and Rocky Creek, home to

Reverend Martin and his Covenanters, distributing notices summoning them to Alexander's Old Field "to give their names as loyal subjects of King George, and receive British protection."<sup>20</sup>

To break up Loyalist operations in the area, John McClure and William Bratton led partisan attacks on Alexander's Old Field on 6 June and two days later at Mobley's Meeting House. Learning that McClure and Bratton were using the Fishing Creek Presbyterian Church as their base of operations, Lieutenant Colonel George Turnbull, British commander at Rocky Mount, ordered Captain Christian Huck, a Loyalist lawyer from Philadelphia, north from Rocky Mount to the Fishing Creek settlement to hunt them down. Huck took with him a detachment of Banestre Tarleton's Legion dragoons and a detachment of mounted Loyalist militia under the command of Major James Ferguson.<sup>21</sup>

Hearing of Huck's approach, McClure and Bratton and their men had retreated from the area along with Reverend John Simpson, pastor of the Fishing Creek community. It was Sunday June 11 and Huck had planned on catching them at worship with the entire congregation. Riding toward the Simpson property, Huck's soldiers shot and killed William Strong, a young boy whose only apparent sin was that he was carrying or as some say reading a *Bible* at the time. Mrs. Simpson, hearing the shots, gathered up her four children and hurried them away from the house where she hid in a nearby orchard. Not finding anyone at home, Huck proceeded to loot and burn the parsonage to include the Reverend Simpson's extensive library.<sup>22</sup>

The following day a crowd gathered at William Hill's ironworks in the New Acquisition District located to the north of the Fishing Creek settlement. The district was bounded by North

Carolina on the north and the Waxhaws District to the east.<sup>23</sup> Having migrated from Northern Ireland in 1762, Hill had opened his iron furnace in 1775. Originally, a center of production for agricultural implements, the iron works were converted in 1776 by their owner to produce cannon balls, ammunition, guns, and among other things popular cast-iron firebacks inscribed with the words "Liberty or Death." Farmers living within a fifty mile radius were as dependent on Hill's properties for their livelihood as their owner.<sup>24</sup>

Lord Rawdon, British commander at Camden, had sent a commissioner to the Ironworks to persuade the New Acquisition people to accept the terms of pardon. Saying he was "empowered to take their submissions and give paroles and protections to all who choose to become British subjects," Rawdon's commissioner went on to declare that the Continental Congress had abandoned the Carolinas and that George Washington and his army had gone into hiding. William Hill stood up to object to what he called lies and deceptions and reminded those present that "we had all taken an oath to defend and maintain the independence of the State." After his forceful enunciation of prior principles, Hill reported "visible animation in the countenance of the citizens and their former state of despondency visibly reversed, and the poor Commissr [sic], was obliged to disappear . . . for fear of the resentment of the audience." Hill then used the moment to move the crowd into electing two colonels and organizing militia companies. They elected Hill and Andrew Neel colonels then chose "all other of their officers to form into companies etc. We then formed into a camp and erected the American standard. And as soon as this was known there were men both of the states of Georgia and South Carolina adding daily to our numbers that we soon became a respectable body."<sup>25</sup>

Similar gatherings were taking place elsewhere in the region. At Bullock's Creek Presbyterian Church in the southwestern corner of the New Acquisition District, militia leader Colonel John Thomas, Jr., addressed a crowd of partisan soldiers asking the same question that many others throughout the colony were asking themselves. "Shall we join the British or strive to gain the noble end for which we have striven for years past? Shall we declare ourselves cowards and traitors, or shall we pursue the prize, Liberty, as long as life continues?" Fellow militia leader Major Joseph McJunkin followed Thomas' oration by repeating the question, "shall we pursue liberty or give up?" McJunkin reported that "hats flew upward and the air resounded with the clapping of hands & shouts of defiance to the armies of Britain and the foes of Liberty."<sup>26</sup>

Within a week following the dismissal of Rawdon's emissary, Turnbull sent Huck into the New Acquisition with orders to destroy Hill's ironworks. Turnbull wrote Lord Cornwallis saying he had taken the liberty of ordering Huck to destroy the ironworks, "the property of Mr. Hill, a great Rebell." Turnbull hoped Huck's party would "do something towards Quieting our Frontier."<sup>27</sup> The British commander admitted targeting local Presbyterians whom he called "the Greatest Skum of the Creation" and who he credited with keeping "the candle of rebellion" burning in the backcountry. Major McJunkin recalled the situation similarly. In his memoirs written after the war, he remembered Turnbull sending Huck "to punish the Presbyterian inhabitants of that place, which he did with a barbarous hand, by killing men, burning churches, & driving off the ministers of the gospel to seek shelter amongst strangers."<sup>28</sup>

On 18 June Huck and company destroyed Hill's ironworks and the entire of William Hill's possessions to include his home, gristmill, sawmill, and slave cabins. They also made off

with all 90 of his slaves, some of whom later became servants to Turnbull's officers at Rocky Mount. The destruction of Hill's properties was a serious setback to the revolutionary cause in the backcountry and was not well received among Hill's Presbyterian neighbors. Few if any of them in the New Acquisition District where Hill's property laid in ruins took the Oath and offers of British protection.<sup>29</sup>

In July, Turnbull again ordered Huck to wade into nearby Presbyterian communities to press residents into taking the Oath of Allegiance and to intercept partisan leaders who were returning home with expectations of recruiting additional soldiers from among their friends.<sup>30</sup> John McClure, William Hill, and William Bratton were high on Huck's list of rebel leaders whom he hoped to visit. He immediately called unnecessary attention to himself when he rounded up a group of local men and declared that "if the Rebels were thick as trees, and Jesus Christ himself were to command them he would defeat them." The crowd composed mostly of older men, was forced to walk back to their homes after Huck's soldiers confiscated their horses. All were appalled by Huck's insults and blasphemous tirade. Huck's public performance, said William Hill, made an impression on these men raising "their courage under the belief that they would be made instruments in the hand of Heaven to punish the enemy for his wickedness and blasphemy." It was said of Huck that he never missed an opportunity "to curse Bibles and Presbyterians."<sup>31</sup>

On July 11, Huck's detachment arrived at the McClure home. Captain McClure was not there but he did find his wife Martha, son James, and son-in-law Edward Martin. The two men had been melting down pewter and casting it into musket balls. Huck declared James and



Edward traitors and condemned them to be hung at sunrise the following day. When Huck demanded the location of her husband, Mrs. McClure told him he was in Thomas Sumter's camp. In disgust, Huck then grabbed the family Bible and threw it into the fire. Mrs. McClure's matron attempted to rescue it only to be struck by one of Huck's officers with the flat of his sword. Taking the two men prisoner, Huck plundered and destroyed the McClure property and moved down the road to the William Bratton residence where he terrorized Martha Bratton and her six-year old son. He threatened to kill her if she did not reveal her husband's location and probably would have had it not been for the intervention of a fellow officer. Three local men who were visiting the Bratton plantation were placed under arrest and condemned to die the next morning along with the other two prisoners from the McClure household.<sup>32</sup>

Accounts differ over how word of Huck's presence in the district reached Thomas Sumter's camp and other local partisans but it did and it did not take long for them to react. A partisan force composed of approximately 250 men, most of who were from the eight Presbyterian Congregations in York and Chester Counties was on Huck's trail almost from the start.<sup>33</sup> Led by McClure and Colonels Bratton, Hill, Neel, and Lacy, they descended upon Huck's soldiers who had moved down the road from the Bratton place and were encamped at Williamson's plantation on the morning of July 12. The partisans completely surrounded their adversary and attacked from all sides.

Taken completely by surprise as they were climbing out of their bedrolls, the British were never able to mount a successful defense against their attackers. After rushing from the Williamson home to join the fight, Huck mounted his horse and attempted to rally his people

only to be shot in the head and killed. With Huck surely dead on the ground his soldiers began throwing down their weapons and begging for quarter. Others took to the woods only to be tracked down by the partisans. The Americans mounted their horses, said Colonel Lacy, and “pursued the flying Loyalists for thirteen or fourteen miles, wreaking vengeance and retaliating for their cruelties and atrocities.”<sup>34</sup> Many of the British injured attempted to gain cover in the woods only to die later of their wounds. Colonel Hill reported “many carcasses found in the woods some days later.” The battle lasted about an hour. Of Huck’s 115 soldiers, reported Tarleton, only 24 escaped injury, death, or capture, a nearly 80 percent casualty rate.<sup>35</sup>

Events such as Huck’s Defeat and others that followed in the summer and fall of 1780 moved British Brigadier General Charles O’Hara, deputy to Cornwallis, to declare that the partisan enemy was given to a wantonness “unheard of before.” On the whole, he thought they constituted a depraved species of humankind “beyond every curb of religion, & Humanity.” Moreover, they had succeeded in terrorizing the King’s friends who in great measure had abandoned the country. The few who had remained in their homes lived “in hourly expectation of being murdered, or stripped of all their property.”<sup>36</sup> Patriot insurgents emboldened by Huck’s Defeat or the Battle of Williamson’s Plantation continued to degrade British regular and Loyalist units for the remainder of July and into the month of August. The event also sparked an increase in the recruitment of partisan soldiers. Loyalist numbers, on the other hand, began to dwindle as it was becoming apparent that British protection left much to be desired.<sup>37</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel Rawdon, British commander at Camden, speculated that before Clinton’s June proclamation the majority of people in the backcountry districts were “ill

disposed to us but were not in arms against us.” Afterwards, he continued, “nine out of ten of them are now embodied on the part of the Rebels.”<sup>38</sup> The offensiveness of the Loyalty Oath and its sometimes violent imposition precipitated what British officers called the “Second Revolution” or the resurgence of rebellion in the Carolina backcountry.<sup>39</sup>

### **Battle of Camden**

During the third week of August Major General Horatio Gates, the “hero of Saratoga,” led another army of Continental troops into South Carolina. Combined with a sizeable militia force, Gates’ army of more than 3,000 marched headlong into General Cornwallis’s British army just outside of Camden, South Carolina on 16 August 1781. In the ensuing battle, Cornwallis succeeded in neutralizing yet another American army sent south to lead the resistance against the British. Gates fled the scene on horseback long before the battle ended, riding as fast as his horse would take him to the American headquarters in Hillsboro, North Carolina. In the days and weeks that followed, the remains of his army would follow him there.<sup>40</sup> Rather than lead, Gates could only look on from his Hillsboro compound as a loose assortment of militia units continued to thwart British intentions in the south.

Two days after Camden, the backcountry insurgency was dealt a near-death blow as Tarleton’s Legion troops surprised Thomas Sumter’s partisans at Fishing Creek, South Carolina, and successfully disintegrated the force that had been such a thorn in Cornwallis’s side. Sumter, half-naked and asleep under a wagon when the British attacked, barely managed to escape. Riding bareback on a draft horse he had cut loose from a wagon, Sumter rode off into the woods and toward Charlotte where he eventually found protection among Colonel William R. Davie’s

partisans.<sup>41</sup> He was, as described by his biographer, “a brigadier general without a servant, soldier, or vestige of a brigade.”<sup>42</sup>

With Sumter on the run, Cornwallis shifted his attention to Francis Marion, the notorious “Swamp Fox,” the one remaining militia leader standing between the British and complete subjugation of South Carolina. Marion had been particularly active in August attacking British lines of communication and supply that stretched between Charleston and Camden. On August 28 Cornwallis directed Major James Wemyss to sweep through the “Country from Kingstree Bridge to the Pedee, and return by the Cheraws,” the object of which was to “disarm in the most rigid manner all persons that you cannot depend on, and punish the concealment of Arms and ammunition with the total demolition of their plantations.” Wemyss had orders to hang all inhabitants of the area who had broken enrollment agreements with local Loyalist units and had joined Francis Marion’s band of partisan rebels. In the event the number of captured rebels proved too great, Wemyss was to use discretion in determining which were to hang and which were to be recipients of the King’s mercy. All others suspected of disloyalty were “to have their property entirely taken from them, or destroyed; and themselves taken prisoners of war.”<sup>43</sup>

The Williamsburg District through which Wemyss was to march was under the control of Marion’s militia, an area that Cornwallis admitted was “in an absolute state of Rebellion.” Almost all of Marion’s soldiers resided in the area and with few exceptions were members of local Presbyterian congregations.<sup>44</sup> Credit for raising the unit belonged to Major John James, one of Marion’s principle subordinates, and a recognized leader of the community. The people of Williamsburg knew him as one of the founding elders of the

Presbyterian Church at Indiantown. James began recruiting among his Williamsburg friends after being told by a British officer that the King's pardon for him and his neighbors was conditional based upon their willingness "to take up arms in his cause." James denounced the officer, telling him that "the people he represents would scarcely submit on such conditions."<sup>45</sup> After raising a sufficient number of troops, he approached Major General Gates requesting an officer to take command of the brigade he had raised "among the Scotch-Irish of Williamsburg Township." Gates assigned Francis Marion to the command with orders to seize the Santee River crossings below the British outpost at Camden with the aim of severing enemy communications with Charleston.<sup>46</sup>

Wemyss moved out of Kingstree on September 5 with a column of about 400 soldiers that included the 63d Foot and an unspecified number of Loyalists attached to his main body.<sup>47</sup> The search and destroy operation eventually covered an area seventy miles long and fifteen miles wide. Two weeks into the operation, Wemyss reported to Cornwallis that he had been trailing Marion, but had not been able to catch him. The people, he continued, were all "concerned in rebellion & most of them very deeply." Almost all the homes were deserted, and the local Loyalist population was "discouraged and apathetic." Finally, he had "burnt and laid waste about 50 houses and Plantations, mostly belonging to People who have either broke their Paroles or Oaths of Allegiance, and are now in Arms against us."<sup>48</sup>

At the center of the desolation was the Presbyterian Church at Indiantown. Weymss thought it a "sedition shop" and apparently had it burned for its part in sowing rebellion among the people.<sup>49</sup> Weymss may have been wrong about some things, but he was right about Presbyterian Churches. They were, by and large, "sedition shops" whose ministers were

practiced in the art of reasoned dissent against abusive British authority. Henry Alexander White, in marking these events, believed the British had “regarded the war in this region as a war against Presbyterians.”<sup>50</sup> Had he been more inclined to the Loyalist persuasion, White could have just as easily described the conflict in the Williamsburg District as a Presbyterian war against the British.

### **Towards the Battle of King’s Mountain**

When Patrick Ferguson issued his 7 September threat from Gilbert Town he was tracking a partisan militia force from North and South Carolina under the command of Colonel Charles McDowell that had defeated a larger Loyalist force at Musgrove’s Mill in Laurens County, South Carolina.<sup>51</sup> Upon hearing of Gates’ defeat at Camden and aware of Ferguson fast approaching from his rear, McDowell began a rapid retreat northward toward North Carolina. McDowell’s troops marched continuously for two days and nights eating nothing but peaches and green corn as they moved. Excessive fatigue, reported William Hill, “eventually broke down every officer so that their faces & eyes swelled & became so bloated in appearance as scarcely to be able to see.”<sup>52</sup> After successfully evading Ferguson, many of them returned to their settlements in the mountains of western North Carolina, southeastern Tennessee, and the border region of Virginia.

Samuel Phillips, the prisoner whom Ferguson paroled to deliver the message, happened to be the cousin of Colonel Isaac Shelby, one of the Musgrove’s Mill victors. The message went straight to Shelby who had retreated from South Carolina to his home in the border region separating western North Carolina from Virginia. Before McDowell’s force had scattered, Shelby had raised the possibility of reuniting and going on campaign against Ferguson and

ridding themselves of his Loyalist force once and for all. After reading Ferguson's message, Shelby began raising a force of Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina militia to go after the brash Scotchman who was threatening to bring the war to their doorstep.

On September 25, nearly one thousand "Over Mountain" men gathered at Sycamore Shoals on the banks of the Watauga River in southeastern Tennessee.<sup>53</sup> The following day Samuel Doak, Presbyterian minister to the people of the Watauga settlement, sent them off to war with prayer, beseeching the "God of Battle" to avenge the slaughter of his people, confounding those "who plot for our destruction," and "exalt themselves against liberty and justice and truth." Finally, Doak prayed for the strength of the biblical Gideon and the same "Sword of the Lord" Gideon had used to cut down his Midianite enemies.<sup>54</sup>

On the way to their appointment with Ferguson, the Over Mountain men were joined by partisan militia from South Carolina to include soldiers under the command of William Hill, Edward Lacy, and James Williams. David Ramsay in his history of South Carolina called them true volunteers, people "embodied to check the invader of their own volition, without any requisition from the Governments of America or the officers of the Continental Army." Their motivation was perhaps best expressed by sixteen-year old James Collins, already a veteran of Huck's defeat. Ferguson, wrote Collins, "seemed to threaten the destruction of the whole country. The Tories were flocking to his standard from every quarter, and there appeared very little safety for us; but as God would have it a patriotic party sprang up." Collins was among the group from South Carolina that fell into the rear of the Over Mountain men, "took their trail, and pushed on till we overtook them [Ferguson] without being intercepted."<sup>55</sup>

At one point they numbered more than 1800 soldiers. For fear of losing Ferguson, they cut their number to 910 of their best horsemen and hurriedly fell upon his trail with the rest following behind as quickly as possible.<sup>56</sup> The vanguard arrived at King's Mountain about three o'clock in the afternoon on October 7. The plan of attack called for the patriots to surround Ferguson's 1,125 soldiers and attack about 20 yards straight up a heavily wooded and rocky slope into Ferguson's encampment at the top of the mountain. Shaped much like a human foot, the mountain top measured only 120 yards long and at its widest point 60 yards. From the extremely narrow heel, the mountain top widened as one moved to the northeast toward the ball of the foot and Ferguson's encampment. It was terrain perfectly suited for the unconventional tactics of partisan warriors. Despite Ferguson's boast that "God Almighty" could not drive him from the top of the mountain, his troops were posted on terrain that terribly complicated the use of the bayonet and the close-order, open-field tactics in which they had been trained.<sup>57</sup>

### **The Battle of King's Mountain**

Although Colonel William Campbell from Virginia had been chosen to command the combined patriot force, the nature of the terrain made that impossible as each subordinate commander was assigned to assault a specific sector of the mountain. In fact, Colonel Isaac Shelby prior to the battle advised the men to not "wait for the word of command. Let each of you be your own officer . . . . If in the woods give them Indian play; advance from tree to tree, pressing the enemy and killing and disabling all you can." Patriot Thomas Young remembered being told that with the firing of the first gun for "every man to raise a whoop, rush forward, and fight his way as best he could." When Isaac Shelby's men let loose with a series of Indian-like



war whoops, Captain Abraham DePeyster, British second in command, thought he had heard the same sounds at the Battle of Musgrove's Mill. He leaned towards Ferguson and with a worried tone told him, "These things are ominous--these are the damned yelling boys."<sup>58</sup> Attacking from all sides, the patriot force against heavy fire and repeated bayonet attacks from Ferguson's Ranger Battalion moved steadily up the slope of the mountain. Each time the Rangers assaulted down the slope into Campbell, Shelby, or Williams' troops, the partisans would retreat for cover, regroup, and renew the attack all the while using their superior marksmanship to kill or wound the enemy.

Inside the ever-tightening ring of partisan warriors, Loyalist militia began raising white flags of surrender only to have them knocked down by Ferguson who, in a last desperate attempt to turn the tide, tried to break the patriot line. Astride his white horse and dressed in a checkered hunting shirt he presented an inviting target. James Collins reported that "fifty rifles must have been leveled at him at the same time; seven rifle balls had passed through his body, both his arms were broken and his hat and clothing literally shot to pieces." Undisputed is the claim that partisan soldiers continued to fire into the hapless crowd of Loyalist soldiers even after Captain DePeyster had presented the white flag of surrender. Colonel Shelby described the scene in disturbing detail. "It was sometime before a complete cessation of the firing on our part could be affected. Our men who had been scattered in the battle were continually coming up and continued to fire, without comprehending in the heat of the moment what had happened; and some who had heard that at Buford's defeat, the British had refused quarters . . . were willing to follow that bad example."<sup>59</sup>

Colonel Campbell finally gained control of the situation but not before knocking down the rifle of one of his own men, exclaiming, “for God’s sake, don’t shoot! It’s murder to kill them now.” He then began running among his soldiers shouting, “Cease firing! For God’s sake, cease firing.” Lieutenant Anthony Allaire, Ferguson’s adjutant, wrote in his diary that the battle “continued an hour and five minutes, but their numbers enabled them to surround us.” The North Carolina militia “seeing this, and numbers being out of ammunition, gave way, which naturally threw the rest of the militia into confusion.” Of the Provincial regulars to which he was attached, Allaire indicated that “all were killed and wounded but twenty.” A more detailed accounting suggested that 157 of Ferguson’s force were killed, 163 wounded, and 698 were taken prisoner. The partisans lost 28 killed and 62 wounded.<sup>60</sup>

### **British Withdrawal from North Carolina**

Things went from bad to worse for Cornwallis as the annihilation of Ferguson’s army at King’s Mountain forced him to revise his plans. Holed up in Charlotte at the time of the battle, he realized Ferguson’s defeat had all but ruined whatever chance he had of raising a sufficient Loyalist force to quell rebellion among the people of North Carolina. To compound matters, British soldiers discovered the counties around Charlotte, thickly populated with Scot-Irish Presbyterians, to be, as Tarleton described them, “more hostile to England than any others in America.” The partisans, continued Tarleton, had succeeded in severing all communication “between the King’s troops and the Loyalists in the other parts of the province. No British commander could obtain any information in that position upon which to base future operations.” With his army weakened by fever, and subjected to continual harassment by partisan forces around Charlotte, Cornwallis decided to retreat back into South Carolina.<sup>61</sup>

Upon departing Charlotte on October 14 an army guide, described by British Lieutenant Roderick McKenzie as a "Presbyterian fanatic from Glasgow," led them down the wrong road and left them in the middle of the night to wander the hills and ravines of the border area of the Carolinas. Slowed also by constant rain that had turned the roads to mud, the troops went the distance without food or shelter and under the continual attack of partisan soldiers that took every opportunity to ambush forging parties and stragglers. Cornwallis became a victim of the fever as did Major George Hanger and five of his fellow officers. Of the six, only Hanger survived losing so much weight that his bones split his skin. Fifteen days later Cornwallis marched into Winnsboro, South Carolina where he and his troops would rest and recuperate in the weeks to follow. John Buchanan concluded in his history of the Southern Campaign that if the retreat from North Carolina was not a nightmare for Cornwallis, it surely turned out to be a "bad dream."<sup>62</sup>

The Battle of King's Mountain ended British hopes of quieting the southern colonies. After King's Mountain the British were never able to regain the war's initiative successfully seized after capturing Charleston the previous spring. In 1781 beginning with the Battle of Cowpens, a combination of confident partisans and regular Continentals under Major General Nathaniel Greene would so severely deplete Cornwallis' troop strength that the British commander would be forced to abandon the Carolinas altogether. Rather than withdraw from North back into South Carolina a second time, Cornwallis after the Battle of Guilford Courthouse in March 1781 led his army north into Virginia where combined American and French ground and naval forces surrounded him at Yorktown and forced his surrender on October 20, 1781.

## **On Horse Thieves, Presbyterians, and Freedom**

Lieutenant Anthony Allaire, one of Ferguson's Provincial regulars from New York, was among the 698 prisoners forcibly marched northward into North Carolina by Colonel Campbell and his partisans following the Battle of King's Mountain. Compared to the southern Loyalists who made up the majority of the prisoners of war and who suffered most from their captors, Allaire thought he was treated reasonably well. On Sunday, October 29, patriot Colonel Benjamin Cleveland invited Captain DePeyster, his officers, and men to attend a Presbyterian Church service in Bethabara, North Carolina. Allaire recorded the event in his diary. Cleveland, wrote Allaire, "marched the militia prisoners from their encampment to the town, and halted them; and sent an officer to our quarters to acquaint us as they were waiting for us. We then ordered our men to fall in; marched to the front of the prisoners; the whole then proceeded on to a height about half a mile from the town. Here we heard a Presbyterian sermon, truly adapted to their principles of the times; or, rather, stuffed as full of Republicanism as their camp is of horse thieves."<sup>63</sup> It was special treatment Allaire probably could have done without.

One of Allaire's horse thieves who lost his life at the Battle of King's Mountain was Colonel James Williams, the Presbyterian elder from the Little River community of Laurens County, South Carolina. Williams was mortally wounded in the closing moments of the battle as a cease fire was being arranged.<sup>64</sup> The following year as the war began to wind down, two of his sons who had been with him at King's Mountain and at his side when he died, were murdered by the notorious Loyalist William "Bloody Bill" Cunningham who had returned from exile to avenge previous humiliations heaped upon him by his former neighbors. On 19 November 1781, Cunningham surprised a group of James Williams' former comrades at Hayes Station, South Carolina. After trapping them in a house and setting it on fire, Cunningham accepted their

surrender with the promise they would be treated as prisoners of war. He spared the women and children and a former associate for past favors, and then proceeded to hang the rest, eighteen-year old Captain Daniel Williams among them. Thinking he was to be spared, Daniel's fourteen-year old brother, Joseph, exclaimed "Oh, brother, Daniel, what shall I tell mother?" Bloody Bill was said to have then run Joseph through with his sword, saying "You shall tell her nothing, you damned rebel suckling." After hanging Daniel and the others, Cunningham and his fellow Loyalists hacked many of the lifeless bodies into pieces.<sup>65</sup>

In Joseph Johnson's biographical sketches of Revolutionary War patriots, James Williams is described as "a Presbyterian, and, like all of that faith, his religion placed him on the side of freedom."<sup>66</sup> Quite obviously, the cost of such freedom for some was unbearably high. For the Williams family and other Presbyterians who paid the cost, they fought as if life without it was not worth living. Freedom for these people was as much a religious principle as it was political, and was not about doing as one chose, or even about tolerance for other beliefs. Aside from the hard won release from British rule, freedom as Williams and other Presbyterians understood it was about the dictates of conscience and submission to restraints that only God could impose.<sup>67</sup>

Amid the euphoria of America's declared independence in 1776, William Hill circulated a petition among his fellow Presbyterians in the New Acquisition District urging the South Carolina General Assembly to make the disestablishment of the Church of England a part of the new state constitution. Hill who would lose most of his earthly possessions to the war called it the "grand question," perhaps the leading principle of independence upon which the new constitution would be based. The Reverend William Tennant who put the motion before the

General Assembly recommended that it become the “foundation article” of the new constitution. Tennant pleaded with his fellow assemblymen to “let the day of justice dawn upon every rank and order of man in the State. . . . That there shall be no establishment of one religious denomination of Christians in preference to another. . . . Yield to the mighty torrent of American freedom and glory.”<sup>68</sup> Whatever the outcome of the war and its meaning for generations to come, its origins for the Presbyterian insurgents of the American south went back to the fact that the British government had long opposed the principle and the people who had chosen to order their lives by it.

Stephen E. Bower is the staff historian for the U.S. Army Soldier Support Institute at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Born and raised in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Dr. Bower graduated from Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, in 1971. His M.S. in the History and Philosophy of Education (1974) and Ph.D. in the History of American Education (1980) were also earned at Indiana University. He has been a staff historian and military history instructor in the Army's school system since 1981. Dr. Bower conducts staff rides covering the Southern Campaign of the American Revolution with special emphasis on the Battles of King's Mountain and Cowpens.

*Stephen E. Bower*  
*Command Historian*  
*US Army Soldier Support Institute*  
*Fort Jackson, South Carolina*

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<sup>1</sup> Isaac Hunt, "Through a Looking Glass for Presbyterians, or a brief examination of their Loyalty, Merit, and other Qualifications for Government, etc." (Philadelphia, 1764), 8-9; quoted in Charles H. Lincoln, *The Revolutionary Movement in Pennsylvania: 1760-1776* (Philadelphia: Ginn and Company, 1901), 104; Kevin Kenny, *The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn's Holy Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 186-187. Hunt, a Philadelphia lawyer and son of an Anglican Priest, became an ardent Loyalist during the American Revolution writing pamphlets supporting the crown and deriding the revolutionaries in the colonies, an activity that eventually led to his arrest and imprisonment. Following the war, he moved to England where he became an Anglican minister in his own right. See *Virtual American Biographies*, [www.famousamericans.net/isaachunt/](http://www.famousamericans.net/isaachunt/).

<sup>2</sup> Lyman C. Draper, *King's Mountain and its Heroes: History of the Battle of King's Mountain, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1780, and the Events Which Led to It* (Cincinnati: P.G. Thomson, 1881), 169; J. D. Bailey, *Commanders at King's Mountain* (Greenville, SC, A. Press, 1980), 97; John Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse: The American Revolution in the Carolinas* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997), 208.

<sup>3</sup> Patriot leaders reported that British official returns for 7 October found in Ferguson's camp after the Battle of King's Mountain gave an enemy strength of 1,125 men. Combined British losses in the battle, however, were reported at 1,104; The Provincial Corps lost 19 killed, 35 wounded, and 68 prisoners; Loyalist forces lost 206 killed, 128 wounded, and 648 prisoners. See Historical Section of the Army War College, *Historical Statements Concerning The Battle of King's Mountain and The Battle of Cowpens South Carolina* (U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, 1928), 31; William Campbell, Isaac Shelby, Benjamin Cleveland, *Official Report, A State of the Proceedings of the Western Army, from the 25<sup>th</sup> of September, 1780 to the reduction of Major Ferguson, and the army under his command*; included in Draper, *King's Mountain and its Heroes*, 523

<sup>4</sup> Robert D. Bass, *Ninety-Six: The Struggle for the South Carolina Backcountry* (Orangeburg, SC: Sandlapper Publishing, 1978), 266; Pat Alderman, *One Heroic Hour at King's Mountain* (Johnson City: The Overmountain Press, 1990), 38; Draper, 275; J. David Damron, *King's Mountain: Defeat of the Loyalists, October 7, 1780* (Cambridge, MA: DaCapo Press, 2003), 70; Banastre Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781 in the Southern Provinces of North America* (London: T. Cadell, 1787), 165.

<sup>5</sup> Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 234-240; Colonel Campbell's General Orders, Oct. 11, 1780, see Draper, *King's Mountain and its Heroes*, 531; Bass, *Ninety-Six*, 274-276; Walter Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats, The Southern Conflict that Turned the Tide of the American Revolution* (New York: William Morrow, 2001), 119.

<sup>6</sup> H. Tyler Blethen and Curtis W. Wood Jr., *Ulster and North America: Transatlantic Perspectives on the Scotch-Irish*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997), 15-23; James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 99-107, 157-159; Ron Chepesiuk, *The Scotch-Irish: From the North of Ireland to the Making of America* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2000); 93-114; John

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Ferling, *Almost a Miracle: The American Victory in the War of Independence*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 452.

<sup>7</sup> John Solomon Otto, *The Southern Frontiers, 1607-1860* (New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1989), 55-56; "York County South Carolina," *Encyclopedia*, [www.tutorgig.com/ed/York\\_County\\_South\\_Carolina](http://www.tutorgig.com/ed/York_County_South_Carolina), 28 Oct 2009; Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History*, 213.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Hooker, editor, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1953), 14 - 62, 240-241.

<sup>9</sup> W.P Breed, *Presbyterians and the Revolution* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1876), 106; Howe, *The History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, vol. 1, 483-485.

<sup>10</sup> The text of the Scottish Metrical Psalms was authorized by the Church of Scotland in 1650, the result of British King James I and son Charles I to uniformly impose the Book of Common Prayer," the "King James" version of the Psalter, and the Episcopal system of government on the Church of Scotland. See J.W. MacMeeken, *History of the Scottish Metrical Psalms with an account of the paraphrases and hymns and of the music of the old Psalter* (Glasgow: McCulloch and Co., 1872), 21-24.

<sup>11</sup> Breed, *Presbyterians and the Revolution*, 97; John Wesley Brinsfield, *Religion and Politics in Colonial South Carolina* (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1983), 131-132.

<sup>12</sup> J.D. Bailey's, *Commanders at King's Mountain*, contains short biographies of the Presbyterian leadership at King's Mountain; Breed, *Presbyterians and the Revolution*, 83; White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders*, 150-153; 518-520; Howe, *The History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, vol. 1, 518-520; Sam Thomas, "The 1780 Presbyterian Rebellion and the Battle of Huck's Defeat," Culture and Heritage Commission, York County, SC, [www.sciway3.net/clark/revolutionarywar/1780-Huck\\_noframes.html](http://www.sciway3.net/clark/revolutionarywar/1780-Huck_noframes.html), Oct 23, 2009; Billy Kennedy, *The Scots-Irish in the Hills of Tennessee* (Belfast, Northern Ireland: Causeway Press, 1995), 159.

<sup>13</sup> Martin quoted in Howe, *The History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, vol. 1, 501; White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders*, 158; Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia*, 30-31.

<sup>14</sup> James A. Wylie, , *Protestantism in Scotland, The History of Protestantism* (New York: Cassell & Company, Limited, 1878), Vol. 3, Book 24, 586-589; P. Hume Brown, *Scotland: A Short History* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1908), 416-417.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Martin quoted in Elizabeth Fries Lummis Ellet, *Domestic History of the American Revolution* (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1850), 179 -180.

<sup>17</sup> Ferguson quoted in R.A. Webb, *History of the Presbyterian Church of Bethel* (Privately Printed: Bethel Presbyterian Church, 1938), 13. Bethel Presbyterian Church is one of the so-called "Four B" churches (all Presbyterian) in York County South Carolina that were centers of the earliest Scotch-Irish communities in the border region separating South and North Carolina. The other three included Bethesda, Beersheba and Bullock's Creek Presbyterian Churches. See the "History of York County," excerpted from "Historical Properties of York County, South Carolina," York County Historical Commission, 1995.

<sup>18</sup> Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats*, 54. Edgar, I assume, believes the British should have acted otherwise based upon certain considerations for the enemy they were facing. Indeed, it is pretty clear the British did know their enemy. It is also clear that it did not make any difference to them. Clinton and Cornwallis' strategic policy and tacit endorsement of excessively punitive and often arbitrary military operations against the backcountry Presbyterians



were guaranteed to offend, alienate, and finally mobilize them to take up arms against an enemy with whom they were all too familiar.

<sup>19</sup> Sir Henry Clinton, *The American Rebellion: Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative of His Campaigns, 1775-1782* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 181; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1780-1783* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1902), 550-553; Franklin and Mary Wickwire, *Cornwallis: The American Adventure*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1970), vol. 1, 174-175.

<sup>20</sup> Sources quoted in Scoggins, *The Day It Rained Militia*, 52-53.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63, 65-66.

<sup>22</sup> Huck's terrorization of Mrs. Simpson and her children is told in McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780*, 591-600 and retold in Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse: The American Revolution in the Carolinas*, 112-113; Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats: The Southern Conflict that turned the Tide of the American Revolution*, 58-60; and Howe, *The History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, vol. 1, 509-512. Scoggins offers the latest rendition of the story in *The Day It Rained Militia*, 65-70.

<sup>23</sup> The New Acquisition District was located in north central South Carolina. It shared a border with North Carolina and took in the area where current day York, Cherokee, Chester, and Lancaster counties come together.

<sup>24</sup> Salley Jr., ed., *Colonel William Hill's Memoirs of the Revolution*, 8; McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780*, 592-93; Bailey, *Commanders at King's Mountain*, 202; Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia*, 82; Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats*, 39.

<sup>25</sup> A.S. Salley Jr., ed., *Colonel William Hill's Memoirs of the Revolution* (Columbia, SC: Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1921), 6-7. McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780*, 588-590.

<sup>26</sup> Reverend James Hodge Saye, *Memoirs of Major Joseph McJunkin, Revolutionary War Patriot* (Greenwood, SC Index Journal, 1925), excerpt cited in Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia*, 73.

<sup>27</sup> Turnbull quoted in Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 113; Ltr, Turnbull to Cornwallis, reprinted in Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia*, 78.

<sup>28</sup> Turnbull and McJunkin, quoted in Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia*, 63, 70-71; "Reminiscences of the Revolutionary War Related by Joseph McJunkin," July 18, 1837.

<sup>29</sup> Scoggins, *The Day It Rained Militia*, 80-85; Cornwallis quoted in Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 113.

<sup>30</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution*, 128-129; Ltr, Lieutenant General Earl Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton, July 15, 1780, reprinted in Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781*, 123-124.

<sup>31</sup> Salley Jr., ed., *Colonel William Hill's Memoirs of the Revolution*, 9; Bailey, *Commanders at King's Mountain*, 203; Joseph Gaston, cousin to Captain John McClure, quoted in Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia*, 52. Huck's hatred of Presbyterians may have been acquired at least in part through his friendship with Mr. Issac Hunt, a Philadelphia lawyer who mentored Huck in the legal profession prior to the beginning of the war. As a Loyalist and pamphleteering supporter of the crown against revolutionary America, Hunt held Presbyterians in Philadelphia and elsewhere primarily responsible for fueling the fires of rebellion in the colonies. Both Hunt and Huck suffered at the hands of Philadelphia patriots who harassed them both mentally and physically for their Loyalist views and their unabated public opposition to the rebellion. Hunt was later imprisoned while Huck escaping charges of "high treason" fled Philadelphia for New York where he joined the British army receiving a captain's commission in 1778. See fnnt 1 and Scoggins, 215-218.

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<sup>32</sup> McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780*, 594-595; Bailey, *Commanders at King's Mountain*, 202-203; Ellet, *Domestic History of the Revolution*, 190-191.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Scoggins provides the demographics of partisan soldiers that fought at "Huck's Defeat." See *The Day it Rained Militia* 205-242.

<sup>34</sup> M.A. Moore, Sr., *The Life of General Edward Lacy* (Spartanburg, SC: Douglas, Evins & Co, 1859) 9-10.

<sup>35</sup> McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780*, 594-599; Salley Jr., ed., *Colonel William Hill's Memoirs of the Revolution*, 10; Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781*, 121; Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia*, 109-142.

<sup>36</sup> Wickwire and Wickwire, *Cornwallis: The American Adventure*, 2 vols., vol. 1, 170-171; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 457.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 456-459; Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 185; Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats*, 142-145.

<sup>38</sup> Rawdon to Cornwallis, July 7, 1780, cited in Pancake, *The Destructive War: the British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782*, 89.

<sup>39</sup> Robert Stansbury Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 125-148. Instead of "second revolution," historian Charles Stedman called it a "counter-revolution." See Stedman, *The History of the Origin, Progress, and Termination of the American War*, Vol. II. (London: 1794), 198-199.

<sup>40</sup> Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 161; Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats*, 111; David Lee Russell, *The American Revolution in the Southern Colonies*, (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland and Company, 2000), 168.

<sup>41</sup> Davie was one of the principle militia leaders of units organized from the "seven churches" of Mecklenburg County North Carolina, the area in around Charlotte. After the war, Davie would represent North Carolina as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention and serve as governor of the state. He was the nephew of William Richardson, Presbyterian minister and founding minister of the Waxhaws Presbyterian Church in South Carolina. Davie spent much of his youth in the Waxhaws area and when he died on November 29, 1820, was buried in the Old Waxhaw Presbyterian Churchyard in northern Lancaster County, SC. See White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders*, 145-150.

<sup>42</sup> Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781*, 113-115; Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (Columbia, SC: R.L. Bryan Company, 1931), 101-102; Robert D. Bass, *Gamecock, The Life and Campaigns of Thomas Sumter* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston; 1961), 84-85.

<sup>43</sup> Cornwallis to Wemyss, August 28, 1780; cited Robert Bass, *Gamecock: The Life and Campaigns of General Thomas Sumter* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), 89.

<sup>44</sup> W. S. Fleming, "Scotch-Irish Settlers in South Carolina, and Their Descendants in Maury County, Tennessee," included in *The Scotch-Irish in America: Proceedings of the Scotch-Irish Congress at Columbia, Tennessee* (Cincinnati: Robert Clark, 1889), 202-203.

<sup>45</sup> Cornwallis to Clinton, August 6, 1780; quoted in Wickwire and Wickwire, *Cornwallis: The American Adventure*, 171; *Southern Presbyterian Review* (Columbia, SC: I.C. Morgan Publisher, Vol. VIII, 1855), 141-143; Howe, *The History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, vol. 1, 413, 480-481; White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders* 154-155.

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<sup>46</sup> George F. Scheer, *American Heritage*, "The Elusive Swamp Fox," April 1958, Vol. 9, Issue 3. William Dobein James, *A Sketch of the Life of Brig. Gen. Francis Marion, and A History of his Brigade* (Morristown, NJ: Digital Antiquaria, 2004) [http:// books.google.com/books](http://books.google.com/books), 26-27.

<sup>47</sup> White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders*, 155-156; Howe, *The History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, vol. 1, 483-484; McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780*, 641, 700-701, 747-748; Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 184-186; Msg, Henry William Harrington to Horatio Gates, September 17, 1780; included in *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina* at [docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr14-0523](http://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr14-0523), 6 November 2009.

<sup>48</sup> Wemyss to Cornwallis, September 30, 1780, cited in Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution* Lambert, 129-130; Russell, *The American Revolution in the Southern Colonies*, 308.

<sup>49</sup> McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution*, 747-748; Howe, *The History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, vol. 1, 483.

<sup>50</sup> White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders*, 155-156. Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1901), 747-48.

<sup>51</sup> The Battle of Musgrove's Mill was fought on August 19, 1780, two days after the Battle of Camden and one day after Tarleton routed Thomas Sumter's militia force at Fishing Creek.

<sup>52</sup> Salley Jr., ed., *Colonel William Hill's Memoirs of the Revolution*, 26.

<sup>53</sup> Bailey, *Commanders at King's Mountain*, 97-98; Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 208-214.

<sup>54</sup> The Reverend Doak's entire sermon and prayer is found in Pat Alderman, *One Heroic Hour at King's Mountain* (Johnson City, Tennessee: The Over Mountain Press, 1990), 21.

<sup>55</sup> David Ramsay, *History of South Carolina from Its First Settlement in 1670 to the Year 1808*, 2 vols. (Charleston: David Longworth, 1809), vol. 1, 217-218; James Potter Collins, *Autobiography of a Revolutionary War Soldier*, (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 258; from the 1859 publication edited by John M. Roberts.

<sup>56</sup> McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780*, 782-784; "Historical Statements Concerning the Battle of King's Mountain and the Battle of Cowpens South Carolina," 20; Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 222-223.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 230-231; Wickwire, *Cornwallis: The American Adventure*, vol. 1, 210-211; Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats*, 118.

<sup>58</sup> Shelby quoted in Bailey, *Commanders at King's Mountain*, 131; Thomas Young, "Memoir of Thomas Young, a Revolutionary Patriot of South Carolina," *Orion* 3, October 1843, 86; DePeyster quoted in Bailey, *Commanders at King's Mountain*, 418.

<sup>59</sup> "Buford's defeat" occurred at the Battle of Waxhaws on 29 May 1780 when British Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton refused to give quarter to surrendering American soldiers under the command of Major Abraham Buford. Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*: 232-233; Collins, *Autobiography of a Revolutionary War Soldier*, 215; Bailey, *Commander's at King's Mountain*, 422-423; Shelby quoted in Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 233.

<sup>60</sup> McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780*, 803; Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 235-236; Anthony Allaire, *Diary of Lieut. Anthony Allaire of Ferguson's Corps: Memorandum of*

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*Occurrences during the Campaign of 1780*, entry for *Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup>*; reprinted as an Appendix to Draper, *King's Mountain and its Heroes*.

<sup>61</sup> Tarleton, *History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781*, 159-160; White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders*, 149-151.

<sup>62</sup> Roderick Mackenzie, *Strictures on Lt. Col. Tarleton's History of the Campaigns of the 1780 and 1781 in the Southern Provinces of the North America* (London: R. Faulder, 1787), 49; Major George Hanger, marching with Cornwallis confirms Mackenzie's account of the Presbyterian guide. Instead of "Presbyterian fanatic," Hanger refers to the guide as a treacherous Presbyterian "scoundrel." See Hanger, *An Address to the Army; In Reply to Strictures, by Roderick M'Kenzie* (Late Lieutenant in the 71<sup>st</sup> Regiment), on Tarleton's *History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781* (London: James Ridgeway, 1789) 62; Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 242-243; McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775- 1780*, 809-811.

<sup>63</sup> Allaire, *Diary of Lieut. Anthony Allaire of Ferguson's Corps*, entry for *Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup>*.

<sup>64</sup> Bailey, *Commanders at King's Mountain*, 296-297.

<sup>65</sup> Judge J. B. O'Neal, 'Biographical Sketch of William "Bloody Bill" Cunningham,' *Southern Literary Journal and Magazine of Arts*, Vol. 4, No. 1, July 1838, 40-45; Draper, *King's Mountain and its Heroes*, 468; Bailey, *Commanders at King's Mountain*, 322-323.

<sup>66</sup> Bailey, *Commanders at King's Mountain*, 321; Joseph Johnson, *Traditions and Reminiscences, Chiefly of the American Revolution in the South: Including Biographical Sketches, Incidents and Anecdotes* (Charleston: Walker & James, 1851), 494.

<sup>67</sup> Presbyterians could be as religiously bigoted and intolerant as any of the established churches of the time. Charles Woodmason, the itinerant Anglican minister who traversed the pre-revolutionary Carolina backcountry in hopes of drawing its people back into the orderly purview of the Episcopal Church, suffered constantly from the insults and humiliations of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians to whom he tried to minister. However, he discovered they were as much or perhaps more intolerant of other believers than they were of him and his Anglican faith. "A Presbyterian," Woodmason observed, "would sooner marry ten of his Children to Members of the Church of England than one to a Baptist." Hooker, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution*, 80.

<sup>68</sup> Salley Jr., ed., *Colonel William Hill's Memoirs of the Revolution*, 30; McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780*, 207-209; Howe, *The History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, vol. 1, 370-372. For a thorough discussion of the disestablishment of the Anglican Church in South Carolina see Brinsfield, *Religion and Politics in Colonial South Carolina*, 104-134.

